

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
Tuesday, December 13, 2016, 5pm-7pm
Warner Elementary School Auditorium
Meeting Minutes**

Tizzy Lockman convened the meeting to order at 5:12pm.

Dan Rich asked committee members to review the Governor-elect's education platform. The committee was asked to provide feedback on each of the major points in the platform for the transition team. He stated that the feedback would be translated into a policy memo that would be sent to the transition team.

The team was also provided with copies of the status report and commission members were asked to keep the goals of the status report in mind when providing feedback. Dr. Rich also thanked Lauren Mancini from Tipton Communications for creating the two, one-page documents that summarize the commission's work and data on Wilmington students.

Linda Poole from Governor-elect's transition team introduced and provided information on the education platform document. She stated that the Education and Healthy Families conducted interviews with Delaware's education stakeholders to garner feedback on the platform. Ms. Poole also provided an overview of the four policy objectives outlined in the platform. The first focuses on making sure that all children get to kindergarten ready to learn. She stressed that change needs to occur in communities, schools, and neighborhoods to ensure that students are prepared for school and that students are in need of additional services to respond to needs like trauma exposure. The next objective centers on giving educators the tools and students the resources they need. The third objective is "refocus the role of DDOE from a regulatory agency to a support agency". Finally, the fourth objective is to ensure that all students graduate from high school career and college ready. Ms. Poole stated that careers that require other types of non-college credentials should not be diminished.

Tony Allen commented that this would be an open process of asking questions and soliciting feedback. He repeated that the Commission will synthesize the information into a memo to the transition team as a matter of public record. He stated that the first draft of the memo will be completed on December 30th with a final submission two weeks after.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Tony Allen called for an approval of meeting minutes from the November 22, 2016 Commission Meeting. The motion was so moved and seconded. Meeting minutes from November were approved.

Governor-Elect's Education Platform Review

Policy Objective 1: Making Sure All Children Get to Kindergarten Ready to Learn

Dan Rich introduced the first objective, making sure all students enter kindergarten ready to learn. He stated that the Commission has highlighted the importance of early childhood in their work and have made the case for a more developmental approach, starting at birth and moving through adult learning. Dr. Rich also mentioned that the Commission has looked to strengthen the machinery that supports early childhood decision-making.

Commission members acknowledged that everyone does not have access to quality early childcare and highlighted the importance of a broad-based value placed on early education in every community. Strengthening the role of families and mobilize and strong integration of support was also discussed as well as the importance of improving coordination between birth-5 and K-12 systems, including data sharing. A commission member noted that children may be assessed in pre-k, but the assessments do not transfer to kindergarten.

Cost obstacles related to early childhood education was discussed, and it was suggested that the Delaware Stars program consider affordability in their quality rating system. Another commission member suggested that agencies work together to promote tax write-offs for daycare. The current purchase of care reimbursement rate was discussed. It was acknowledged that childcare centers are raising concerns that it is expensive to accept purchase of care students.

Commission members spoke about the disjointed nature of the entire early childhood education system and emphasized that different entities should collaborate to promote integration. Data sharing between early childhood programs and K-12 schools was also identified as a major obstacle. However, it was noted that relationships, not just data, need to be strengthened.

Several commission members noted that care at an early age involves paying attention to a wide variety of human needs, for example, vision, dental care, and housing insecurity. One commission member stated that there needs to be someone at the ground level working with families to meet the needs of students. It was also acknowledged that service integration means reaching families where they are, and schools are not always the best place to reach families if children are bused to a school away from their community.

Successful programs in the state were also identified, including the parents as teachers programs. Several commission members highlighted that successful programs in districts and schools should be expanded and best practices should be shared across schools and districts.

Policy Objective 2: Giving Educators the Tools and Students the Resources They Need

Commission members engaged in a discussion about the state's accountability system. A commission member commented that the state's current accountability system does not value ready to learn factors enough. Another commission member highlighted that the country is moving away from a time where test scores were the ultimate measure of progress and stressed that test scores should be considered but in tandem with additional measures of student growth. The commission also discussed chronic absenteeism as a factor that should be tracked more closely due to its relationship to other outcomes like higher incarceration rates. The importance of helping teachers become diagnosticians and high quality professional development was also underscored.

The value of connecting teachers to community resources that can be mobilized was mentioned by commission members as well as the subgroups under the three funding priorities that must be paid attention to, including traumatized children, children that are homeless or have severe housing insecurity, families who change schools or districts, and students in foster care.

Commission members then discussed what topics should be addressed in professional development opportunities. Topics identified included: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma informed care, implicit bias, institutional and structural racism, restorative justice, cultural competency, building capacity around English language learners, and training on the developmental needs of students.

It was mentioned that there are best practices in professional development geared toward the way adults learn best. The importance of school-embedded, on-going professional development was also noted.

It was also mentioned that the Commission should consider ways to capitalize on the programs and initiatives occurring in the Obama administration.

Pre-service and graduate level education was pointed out as good in many areas such as the special track for disabilities, however, stressed that there is no equivalent track for trauma and children living in poverty to help teachers become specialists in that area. It was also acknowledged that creating a track for teaching students with trauma and in poverty should not create a stigma and limit those children.

Strengthening collaborative learning for educators was discussed, and commission members recognized that successful programs are not sustained. Successful programs discussed by commission members include teach residency or apprenticeship programs and new teach mentor programs. Another commission member suggested utilizing a teacher assessment system that both creates a career path and builds a compensation system that allows teachers to take on leadership roles while staying in the classroom.

Policy Objective 3: Refocus the Role of DDOE from a Regulatory Agency to a Support Agency

Commission members stressed that DOE needs to lead and take advantage of every opportunity that ESSA provides. Several members also mentioned that the agency is mainly focused on compliance.

Commission members discussed requesting a delay on the submission of the ESSA state plan. Committee members discussed that delaying the submission of the state plan could provide the state with an opportunity to take stakeholder feedback into consideration. There was also a discussion about what year the new plan would be implemented if submission was delayed.

It was stressed that when the upcoming administration talks about public education both districts and charters should be included. It was also mentioned that DOE should be the research and

development arm of the state but they are too bogged down with compliance and regulation to help districts and schools.

Commission members then engaged in a discussion about the state's current responsibility of authorizing charters. One commission member commented that districts have the opportunity to do so but have not taken advantage of it.

Policy Objective 4: Ensure All Students Graduate from High School Career and College Ready

Several commission members mentioned promoting a stronger balance between the emphasis on college and career readiness.

The importance of communicating the opportunities available in each school to consumers was discussed, and one commission member commented that the current vo-tech system excludes the at-risk students that would be best served by it.

It was recommended to look at summer fellowships and partnerships with industry to help improve curriculum and planning. The importance of financial literacy and life skills readiness was also emphasized by several commission members. Several commission members also discussed the need for an early integration of college and career readiness and the importance of providing students with an early vision of success.

Additionally, the importance of postsecondary credentials in the new economy was highlighted. A commission member stressed that many of the jobs available immediately after graduation are jobs and not careers. Commission members recognized that some students may not be able to attend college immediately after graduation, but they should still not lose sight of postsecondary education. Finally, commission members discussed that that minority students should not be typecast into certain low wage jobs, and career pathways should be examined to make sure they are best serving the needs of students and do not exclude English language learners.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was then adjourned at 7:32 pm.

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission

Attendance at the 12/13/2016 Meeting

Commission Members

Tony Allen, Chair

Tizzy Lockman, Vice-Chair

Frederika Jenner

Karen Eller

Aretha Miller

Chandra Pitts

Eve Buckley

Tizzy Lockman

Michelle Taylor

Kenny Rivera

Margie Lopez Waite

Joe Pika

Meredith Griffin

Members of the Public

Linda Poole

Ariana Minella

Vicki Gehrt

Bill Doolittle

Meghan Wallace

Tom Driscoll

Lauren Mancini

Bill Freeborn

Lee Davis

Gwen Angalet

Dawn Alexander

Pavia Fielder

Rudy Fielder

Equetta Davis

Leah Davis

Swiyah Whittington

Institute for Public Administration Staff

Dan Rich

Kelly Sherretz

Kelsey Mensch

Chester Holland

Taylor Hawk